



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
3170 EAST MAIN STREET  
CANON CITY, COLORADO 81212



FRONT RANGE RESOURCE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING  
CANON CITY, CO  
March 2, 2005

**MINUTES**

**Group 1**

**Virginia Patton  
Gene King  
Jim Coleman  
Rick Thompson**

**Group 2**

**Kaaren K. Hardy  
Donna Murphy  
Larry Strohl**

**Group 3**

**Keith McNew  
Jim Bensberg  
Michael Bush  
Loren Whittemore  
Joseph Duda**

RAC Members not in attendance: Charles Rech, Josh Osterhoudt

**GUESTS:** SeEtta Moss, Arkansas Valley Audubon Society; James Bouknight, Canon City Daily Record, Tom Purvis, Arkansas Valley Cycling Club in Salida.

**BLM/FS PERSONNEL:** Roy Masinton, Ron Wenker, Ken Smith, Joe Vieira, Mark Swinney, Jeff Stoney, Paul Crispin, Dave Walker, Pete Zwaneveld.

**Chairman Loren Whittemore called the meeting to order.**

**COUNCIL BUSINESS:**

Roy announced the nomination period for RAC Members will be from March 4 to April 18. There are 5 positions on the Front Range RAC whose terms will end this August. Those positions are filled by Virginia Patton, Kaaren Hardy, Keith McNew, Loren Whittemore and a vacant position. Current RAC members that want to be re-nominated should ask Ken for a Nomination Form. Two letters of reference will need to accompany the Form.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**SeEtta Moss** of the Audubon Society: In January a conservation group of about 25 people hiked Five Points Gulch, in a wilderness study area and found ATV tracks. This is a non-motorized area and needs signs put up. Another concern was the San Luis Valley Travel Management Plan analysis is only dealing with route by route rather than cumulative issues that go with route analysis.

**Tom Purvus, Arkansas Valley Cycling Club:** We want to let the RAC know we are on track with our plan for the Salida area and hope to have our formal plans submitted on March 18. We saw the Colorado Mountain Club Plans and found them to be very agreeable.

**Ron Wenker, State Director Comments:**

Ron thanked the RAC for all the time and effort they have put into the program. Some of the top issues Colorado BLM is dealing with come from energy development. We have a rapid growth in the Rocky Mountains, a couple of years ago we were looking at about 200 applications for drilling permits on a yearly basis. This year we are looking at 600 plus. The demand for oil and gas goes up with the price of oil and gas.

Fire and Fuels management across the State are also some of our priorities. There is approximately 15,000 acres of wildland/urban interface fuels treatment plans but the zone right next to communities where we try and help reduce the fuel load outside the wildland/urban interface includes about 12,000 acres of treatment. A lot of our effort is looking for outlets for the Biomass from these fuel treatment areas. Land health is another priority for us. In the continuing battle against invasive weeds BLM is looking at an area of about 20,000 acres that we will treat in cooperation with area partners. Other priorities include the clean up of abandoned mines, travel management and Service First.

**MANAGERS UPDATE:**

**Mark Swinney, San Luis Valley:**

The State Land Exchange has started and the contractor is asking for input from all our staff leads in different program areas. The Park Service has come out with some public meetings and suggested alternatives. One issue that came out was they really didn't provide a reasonable, viable alternative access through the Forest Service Land. We are also looking at the possibility of dual delegation of Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers in the Valley to cover the BLM public land.

**Jeff Stoney, U.S. Forest Service, Rio Grande National Forest:**

The Forest is focusing on dual delegation, co-location and integration through Service First. We also have Wolf Creek Ski Area and the Special Use Permit issue that has been going on with the Village. There are some Range Allotment reviews in progress across the Valley.

**Paul Crispin, U.S. Forest Service, Pike San Isabel, (representing Bob Leverton):**

The new direction the Forest Service has taken in Forest Planning Policies offers some means of expediting the planning process. It allows the opportunity for public involvement. The Forest Team Leader is planning to talk with the RAC sometime in the near future. An important element of the planning effort is that we ask for and accommodate the concerns and interest of the special interest groups. Our objective was to have a draft of the first two units, which are the two grasslands, units by this fall, we are still focusing on that and by October we will have something to share.

The Forest Service currently does not have any discretion and have to put out every fire that is started by lightning. They are looking at initiating beneficial fire use planning. Another priority project that has been developing for sometime is the reconstruction of about 40 miles of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. This effort includes three National Forests, several Ranger Districts and several partners that are working to construct about 40 miles of that trail.

**Roy Masinton, Royal Gorge Field Manager:**

BLM has a number of land exchange efforts on the Front Range: Black Hawk/Dilley Exchange consisting of about 67 parcels that are all in a mining district, in exchange for acquiring land from the Dilley Ranch which is just outside of Canon City; The Sipal Exchange in South Park will also include about 1600 acres that will be under a conservation agreement after this exchange is done; the Cooper Mountain Exchange is just outside of Canon City, BLM will acquire about 1700 acres and exchange about 2000 acres of land; the Smith Creek/Kremmling Exchange is being done in cooperation with the Kremmling Field Office; the Hayden Ranch acquisition near Leadville is being done using Land and Water Conservation Funds; the Hollenbeck Exchange involves 120 acres north of the Hayden Ranch property owned by the City of Leadville and public land near Longmont. The last one is the Stanley Creek/Wolf Springs Exchange that has been completed. All exchanges are based on fair market value.

The BLM and U.S. Forest Service will have a single engine air-tanker, under contract, stationed at the Fremont County Airport this spring and summer

**Mark Swinney - San Luis Valley Travel management Analysis Process and McIntyre/Simpson Ranch Update:**

We had a meeting in early February with the RAC Subcommittee on the Travel Management Plan and looked at management goals and the planning process. The Subcommittee has given us additional comments and helped us in the process. We are quite a ways through the analysis process. The Valley has about 520,000 acres involved in this plan and are using ARS's decisions tree process to document our analysis of that area. There are two proposed alternatives submitted by the San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council. The compromise proposal they have submitted looks a lot like our limited access proposal. The other one is what they call the conservation proposal which is quite a bit more conservative than our limited access proposal. We hope by May to start writing the EA and by September or October finish the draft.

**Pete Zwaneveld/RAC Subcommittee Members - South Park Land Tenure Adjustment Plan:**

BLM had a meeting with the RAC Subcommittee and a group of people that represented some of the key constituents up there. BLM suggested some proposals and got feedback at the meeting.

The Park County Commissioners were also briefed and were very pleased that BLM had used some of the County data from their master plan in our analysis and was very supportive of it.

BLM is currently developing an EA, this will become our proposed action, and we will have a no action alternative. In early May we should get the EA out to the public, have another public meeting in Fairplay and get public comments. It may be possible to issue a final decision and amend our Plan by September.

### **Subcommittee reports:**

Kaaren Hardy: One of the attendees asked that the economic importance of the remaining grazing land be considered because there is not much of that left in conjunction with the preservation of open space. They also asked about preserving large parcels for grazing allotments. Park County requested that BLM overlay the resource categories on each parcel so they could better explain the situation to people. There was also a recommendation to do an overlay of ranch properties. There didn't seem to be any objections for the BLM categorization among the people who attended.

Larry Strohl: Park County is one of the few counties that seem to have some understanding about recreation. They generically looked at hunting, fishing and wildlife watching and found that wildlife watching provides more economic impact than hunting and fishing. They don't want any more federally owned property, acreage wise. There is a misunderstanding about what public land ownership means. The economic study that has been updated to 2002 shows that the presence of recreation lands, especially lands the Division of Wildlife owns brings more money into the county.

The Council gave unanimous support for this planning effort.

Roy: We had several of the grazing community at the meeting in Fairplay and they were very supportive at what was being proposed.

### **LUNCH**

#### **Dave Walker/RAC Subcommittee members - Arkansas River Travel Management Update and Subcommittee Report:**

The travel management planning process includes defining the goals, then defining the management objects for the area. The third stage is to begin analysis, build alternatives, analyze and begin making decisions on what travel uses are going to be compatible with the goals and management objectives of the area. We need public involvement in all three of these stages. The first stage is almost complete and we are about half way through the second stage, with public meetings in Canon City and Salida last fall. From those meetings we have received about 300 written comments from stake holders telling us their issues and recommendations. The planning area is broke down into 14 smaller subunits. Together the desired future conditions and the management objectives will guide the management decisions in that subunit. They basically provide the criteria that will be used to gage and compare the effects of different alternative travel management actions. We are getting close to completing the draft of the written subunit descriptions

that include the desired future conditions and the management objectives. Once those are finalized there will be another public meeting.

**John Silence, BLM Colorado State Office - BLM Law Enforcement Partnerships:**

Partnerships are what make the programs work. Last year with nine uniformed Rangers and two Special Agents assigned to Colorado we were engaged in 1,482 total incidents. In the year 2000 BLM handled 111 OHV violations and in 2004 we did 504 cases. We have 12 positions in Colorado but only have 9 Officers right now.

BLM in Colorado is working with a lot of agencies including Colorado State Parks and the Colorado Division of Wildlife. We have agreements with the Colorado State Patrol and are the only Federal Agency that works with State Patrol on a 24 hour radio dispatch. We also have agreements with the Colorado National Guard. We have some county Law Enforcement Agreements where we actually reimburse those counties for providing services. BLM works closely with County Sheriff's and they give us a lot of support. We have agreements with Colorado National Monument, Mesa Verde National Park and Great Sand Dunes National Park. All of our Uniformed Officers and both of our Agents now retain the commission with the Division of Wildlife which allows us to do a lot of things with the Division. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Forest Service but do not have cross delegation. Federal Officers do not have authority to enforce State Laws in Colorado.

The next Front Range RAC meeting is May 3 and 4, 2005 in the San Luis Valley.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

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Roy L. Masinton  
Royal Gorge Field Manager  
Bureau of Land Management

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Loren R. Whittemore  
Chairman  
Front Range Resource Advisory Council